

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 179547

REF: PORT OF SPAIN 1870

FOLLOWING REPEAT LAGOS SENT SECSTATE, DIA, INNO ABIDJAN, ACCRA,
DAKAR, LOME, LONDON, NIAMEY, NDJAMENA, YAOUNDE, DOUALA,
CADUNA, IBADAN, JULY 29:

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 7218

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINS, PINT, NI

SUBJECT: NIGERIAN COUP - SITREP 3

REF: LAGOS 7201

SUMMARY: THERE VERY LITTLE HARD INFORMATION TO REPORT.
SAME ANNOUNCEMENT ON RADIO NIGERIA CONTINUES BE BROADCAST
BUT NOTHING NEW. THERE SOME INDICATION YOUNGER MILITARY
OFFICERS SEEKING OPPORTUNITIES TO ENJOY FRUITS OF OFFICE
MAY BE INVOLVED IN COUP BUT THAT AS MOST OTHER RUMORS IS
STILL SPECULATION, NAMES OF GENERAL KATSINA AND BRIGADIER
DANJUMA (PARA 5 REFTTEL) CONTINUES TO BE MENTIONED IN
CONNECTION WITH TODAY'S EVENTS. END SUMMARY.

2. THERE HAVE BEEN NO OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS OF ARRESTS
ALTHOUGH RUMORS CIRCULATING THAT SUPREME COMMAND CHIEF
OF STAFF WEY AND THE THREE SERVICE COMMANDERS HAVE BEEN
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PLACED UNDER ARREST.

3. SO FAR THERE HAS BEEN NO REPEAT NO ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING COMPOSITION OF NEW GOVERNMENT OR ITS POLICIES. SAME MONOTONOUS GARBA RECORDING CONTINUES TO BE PLAYED AT HALF-HOUR INTERVALS AND ALTHOUGH NBC MISSED AT 1530 IT WAS PLAYED AGAIN AT 1600. THERE WAS RUMOR THAT THERE WOULD BE "PRESS RELEASE" ISSUED AT 1600 LOCAL BUT THUS FAR NO SUCH RELEASE HAS BEEN MADE NOR HAS RADIO NIGERIA CARRIED ANYTHING. THIS MAY INDICATE THAT COUP MAKERS ARE STILL NEGOTIATING AMONG THEMSELVES OR AMONG MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT CONCERNING A NEW POWER HIERARCHY.

4. LAGOS STREETS ALMOST COMPLETELY DEVOID OF TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIANS. REPUBLIC HOUSE WHICH HOUSES MINISTRIES OF DEFENSE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS GUARDED BY ARMED TROUPS AS ARE NIGERIAN EXTERNAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS, NIGERIAN BROADCASTING, OIL TANKERS, AND PETROLEUM STORAGE TANKS, AND IKEJA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.

5. LENDING SOME CREDENCE THAT GOWON AWARE OF COUP (OR AT LEAST AWARE SOMETHING MAY HAVE BEEN AFOOT) ARE STORIES CIRCULATING HERE THAT ENTIRE FAMILY OUT OF COUNTRY. MRS. GOWON AND SON REPORTEDLY IN UK. INTERESTING ALSO TO NOTE THOSE MILITARY OFFICIALS WHO HAPPENED BE ABSENT FROM LAGOS. THEY INCLUDE GENERAL KATSINA WHO WAS IN KANO TO PLAY POLO MATCH; LAGOS STATE GOVERNOR MOBOLAJI JOHNSON WHO WAS IN KANO TO ATTEND SAME POLO MATCH; LT. COLONEL AMIN WHO ACCORDING TO SOME REPORTS WAS SENT BY COUP-MAKERS TO WATCH GOWON IN KAMPLA; GOWON'S AIDE LIEUTENANT COLONEL WALBE WHO ACCORDING TO UK HIGH COMMISSION TRAVELLED TO KAMPALA WITH GOWON BUT CAME BACK; BRIGADIER MURTALA MOHAMMED WHO IN UK AND BRIGADIER AKINRINADE WHO APPARENTLY IS IN U.S.

6. EDDIE IROH OF EASTERN STATES BROADCASTING WHO CONTACTED ENUOU, REPORTED THERE WAS "FRIGHTENING CALM" IN THAT CITY. IBOS IN LAGOS ALSO UNEASY, NOT KNOWING WHO BEHIND TODAY'S DEVELOPMENTS.

7. OTHER MAJOR EMBASSIES APPARENTLY CAUGHT AS MUCH BY SURPRISE AS WE. UK HIGH COMMISSION EARLY THINKING HAS IT CONFIDENTIAL

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THIS MAY BE A COUP OF YOUNG COLONELS AND LT. COLONELS WHO THUS FAR HAVE BEEN DISADVANTAGED IN TERMS OF ENJOYING REWARDS OF POWER BUT WHO HAVE CLOUT BECAUSE THEY ACTUALLY COMMAND TROOPS. INTERESTING TO POINT OUT HERE THAT BRIGADIERS DANJUMA AND HARUNA NOT REPEAT NOT MEMBERS OF SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL AND IN FACT ARE AT LEAST IN NOMINAL CHARGE OF TROOPS.

8. IN VIEW DUSK-TO-DAWN CURFEW, EMBASSY MAINTAINING 24-HOUR WATCH TONIGHT WITH DUTY OFFICER, SECRETARY AND MESSAGE CENTER ON DUTY IN CHANCERY.

9. COMMENT: WHILE IT CAN ONLY BE SPECULATION AT THIS POINT, IT APPEARS THERE IS HEAVY INVOLVEMENT OF OLD NORTHERN REGION PERSONALITIES IN CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS. WE WILL CONTINUE EFFORTS TO PIERCE MILITARY WALL OF SILENCE TOMORROWV. CROSBY UNQUOTE. INGERSOLL

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